

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-readable medium containing therein instructions that, when executed, generate on a display device a graphical user interface (GUI) for creating or revising a rule that contains a condition and an action to be taken when the condition is satisfied, the GUI comprising:

5 a rule-editing area;
first and second user-selectable elements, wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the condition of the rule upon user selection of the first element, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the action of the rule upon user selection of the second element; and
10 a rule-preview area configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the condition and the action.

2. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the rule-preview area is configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the rule
15 condition and the rule action in a read-only format.

3. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the rule contains at least two conditions, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or modify any the conditions upon user selection of the first element.
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4. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the rule contains at least two actions, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or modify any of the actions upon user selection of the second element.

25 5. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the condition includes an attribute name, an operator, and an attribute value.

6. The computer-readable medium of claim 5, wherein the rule-editing area contains:
a first menu having a set of user-selectable options for determining the attribute name
30 of the condition;

a second menu having a set of user-selectable options for determining the operator of the condition; and

a text-entry field to accept user input for determining the attribute value of the condition.

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7. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the action includes an action name and an action value.

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8. The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the rule-editing area contains:
a menu having a set of user-selectable options for determining the action name of the action; and
a text-entry field to accept user input for determining the action value of the action.

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9. The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the action further includes an attribute name and an attribute value.

10. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the first user-selectable element is adjacent to the second user-selectable element.

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11. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the first and second user-selectable elements are each either user-selectable button or user-selectable text elements.

12. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the first and second user-selectable elements are each graphical tabs.

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13. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the rule may be used to process textual information.

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14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the rule may be used to process textual information contained in an email message.

15. A graphical user interface (GUI) for creating or revising a rule that contains a condition and an action to be taken when the condition is satisfied, the GUI comprising:

a rule-editing area;

first and second user-selectable elements, wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the condition of the rule upon user selection of the first element, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the action of the rule upon user selection of the second element; and

a rule-preview area configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the condition and the action.

16. A computer-implemented method for providing a graphical user interface (GUI) that may be used to create or revise a rule that contains a condition and an action to be taken when the condition is satisfied, the method comprising:

providing a rule-editing area;

providing first and second user-selectable elements, wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the condition of the rule upon user selection of the first element, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the action of the rule upon user selection of the second element; and

providing a rule-preview area configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the condition and the action.

17. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions contained therein for performing a method to provide a graphical user interface (GUI) that may be used to create or revise a rule that contains a condition and an action to be taken when the condition is satisfied, the method comprising:

providing a rule-editing area;

providing first and second user-selectable elements, wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the condition of the rule upon user selection of the first element, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the action of the rule upon user selection of the second element; and

providing a rule-preview area configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the condition and the action.

18. A system for providing a graphical user interface (GUI) that may be used to create or revise a rule that contains a condition and an action to be taken when the condition is satisfied, the method comprising, wherein the system is programmed to:

provide a rule-editing area;

provide first and second user-selectable elements, wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the condition of the rule upon user selection of the first element, and wherein the rule-editing area is configured to accept user input to create or revise the action of the rule upon user selection of the second element; and

provide a rule-preview area configured to provide a display of a user-understandable representation of both the condition and the action.